(b) if so, whether the expenditure on modernsation will be over and above the new purchases being initiated by the ordnance factories;

(c) whether the performance of our ordnance factories have been very poor so far;

(d) whether Government would encourage private industry in this sector; and

(e) what are Government's views on this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI HARIN PATHAK): (a) A sum of Rs. 1241 Crore is proposed to be invested during the IXth Plan period. Till 1999-2000 a sum of Rs. 512 Crore has been invested and the balance of Rs. 729 Crore is planned for the remaining period i.e., next two years.

(b) Above planned figure is the total investment during IXth Plan and includes replacement of old Plant and Machinery as well induction of new Machines and Processes.

(c) Performance of Ordnance Factories during the preceeding years has been commensurate with the requirements of various major indentors i.e., Defence Services and MHA. The production in Ordnance Factories has been streadily growing over the years. due to enhanced requirement during Kargil Operation, the out-Put during 1999-2000 increased from 33% to 900 for ammunition items, 20% to 108% in clothing items and 76% to 233% for cables. An overall increase in value of issues of 34.6% over the previous year was achieved in 1999-2000.

(d) and (e) Ordnance Factories are meeting the requirement of Armed Forces of desired quality and in requisite quantity and in many ways encourage the Civil sector by sourcing of raw materials, components and semi-finished, goods. also before any investment in OFB to create any capability/capacity is envisaged, the existing capability/capacity in civil sector including Public Sector Undertakings are taken into account.

Foreign vessel released by Government of Maharashtra

3381. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to certain reports appearing in the newspaper "Jansatta' dated 29th February, 2000 indicating

that a foreign vessels namely "Alondra Rainbow' containing highly sensitive cargo seized by the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard was released by Government of Maharashtra on receipt of rupees ten crores;

(b) whether the Central Government permitted the State Government to release the foreign vessel;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the action proposed to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The pirated vessel "Alondra Rainbow" was apprehended on 16.11.1999 by the Coast Guard and the Navy and the vessel along with the crew was handed over to the Mumbai Police on 21.11.1999 for further investigation. The said vessel was released under the orders of Court dated 22.1.2000, after receipt of a safe deposit of Rs. 1 crore by the court. The apprehended crew continue to be in judicial custody.

Introduction of LDCE in ACSO's grades of AFHQ Civil Service

3382. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to answer to Unstarred Question 2659 given in Rajya Sabha on 23rd December 1998 and state:

(a) whether the notification for implementing the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission has since been issued;

(b) if not, the details of action taken during the last 14 months; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken for notifying the amendments to ensure participation of eligible persons in the examination to be held in the year 2000?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The Recruitment Rules of AFHQ Civil Service incorporating the LDCE provision has been approved by the Department of Personnel and Training and is under consideration of the UPSC. The Rules will be notified on clearance from UPSC and other agencies involved, including Ministry of Law.